

Bianca, Pam

From: ntwales <ntwales@omsoft.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2014 3:44 PM
To: LABTestimony
Cc: zRepresentative Laura Hoydick; Elizabeth Rival; llee@nfbct.org; 'Edward'
Subject: Raised H.B. 5279 - Please Support

501 King Street
Stratford, Connecticut

Dear Labor & Public Employees Committee Members, As a constituent and treasurer of the National Federation of the Blind

(NFB) of Connecticut, I wholeheartedly urge you to support and pass H.B.

5279 "An Act Eliminating the Minimum Fair Wage Exception for Certain Citizens of Connecticut".

H.B.5279 is a major step in the direction of equality for all persons with disabilities. It has been demonstrated that the 75-year-old practice of paying those with a disability pennies per hour is an outdated system that does not work. The assumption that disabled workers are not as productive as their non-disabled counterparts is false. This assumption has been disproven with the countless modern employment models that have been put into practice across the country. For example, all locations of National Industries for the Blind are successful while paying disabled employees at or above minimum wage.

Further, all workshops in Vermont have given up the failed sub-minimum wage practice, and President Obama's recent executive order on the pay of Federal contract workers also ends this practice for all contracts that the order affects. The justification that sub-minimum wage workshops can be used as a stepping stone to full-wage employment is inaccurate. Data shows that less than five percent of disabled workers placed in sub-minimum wage workshops successfully transition to a competitive employment model.

The practice of sheltered workshops paying their workers pennies per hour is revolting. This system is discriminatory and does not provide an environment where initiative is rewarded. Ninety-five percent of disabled workers that are employed in a sub-minimum wage paying workshop stay there permanently. I ask you to stop reinforcing this unjust system. My colleagues and I look forward to working with you to pass and build upon this good bill, H.B. 5279.

Sincerely,

Nathanael T. Wales, Treasurer

National Federation of the Blind of Connecticut

cc:

Elizabeth Rival, President, NFB of Connecticut Lucia Lee, Outreach Director, NFB of Connecticut Edward Shaham, Legislative Director, NFB of Connecticut Representative Laura Hoydick